

THE
Saturday Magazine.

Nº 663.

SUPPLEMENT,

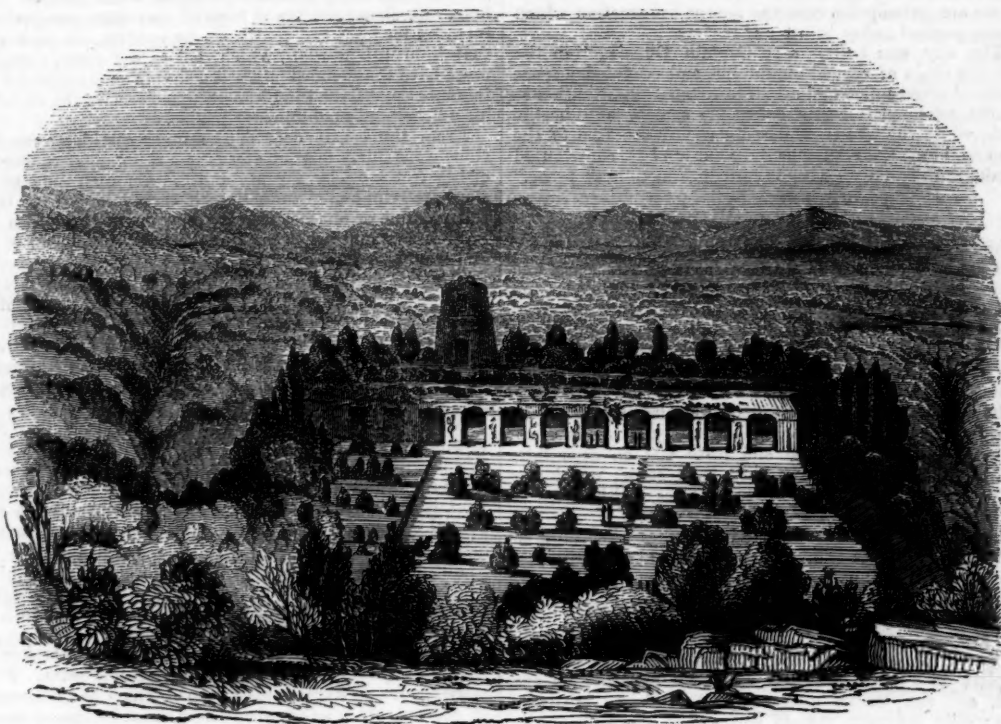
OCTOBER, 1842.

{ PRICE
 ONE PENNY.



RUINED CITIES IN CENTRAL AMERICA AND MEXICO.

II.



PALACE OF PALENQUE.

REMAINS OF ANCIENT STRUCTURES IN THE
 MEXICAN STATES.

A thousand years have rolled along,
 And blasted empires in their pride,
 And witnessed scenes of crime and wrong,
 Till men by nations died.
 A thousand summer suns have shone,
 Till earth grew bright beneath their sway
 Since thou, untenanted and lone,
 Wert rendered to decay.

Alas, for the far years, when clad
 With the bright vesture of thy prime,
 Thy proud towers made each wanderer glad,
 Who hailed thy sunny clime!
 Alas, for the fond hope and dreams,
 And all that won thy children's trust,—
 God cursed,—and none may now redeem,
 Pale city of the dust!—ECKHARD.

INTRODUCTION.

We devoted a recent Supplement to the description of the remains of ancient Indian edifices in the provinces of Central America, and we propose in the present to notice some of those which are found in the Mexican States. This division of the subject, according to the political boundaries of the two republics which occupy this part of America, has been chosen only as suitable to the space to which we are circumscribed; for a division of the Continent, according to its geographical features, would include within the region of Central America, those provinces of Mexico to which our attention is principally called. The edifices of Palenque, Uxmal, and Mitla, and the pyramids

VOL. XXI.

of Teotihuacan, Cholula, Xochicalco, and Papanta, which are found in this tract of country, are erections of a magnitude which could only have been constructed in a very populous territory, and under the auspices of a well organized government.

DISCOVERY OF PALENQUE.

We are told that, "in the year 1750, a party of Spaniards travelling in the interior of Mexico penetrated to the lands north of the district of Carmen, in the province of Chiapas, when all at once they found, in the midst of a vast solitude, ancient stone buildings, the remains of a city extending several miles. The existence of such a city was entirely unknown; there was no mention of it in any book, and no tradition that it had ever been." To this day it is not known by what name it was called, and the only appellation given to it is that of Palenque, after a village of that name in the neighbourhood, from which it is sometimes distinguished as Old Palenque. Palenque is simply a Spanish term signifying palisades, or wooden enclosure.

For upwards of thirty years little attention was paid to this discovery, but in 1786, the King of Spain ordered the place to be examined. In 1787, accordingly, Captain Del Rio proceeded to explore the ruins, under a commission from the government of Guatemala. With the assistance of two hundred Indians, he cleared a large space from the wood with which it was covered, and thus revealed to view a number of edifices. He drew up a report, which was suffered to remain locked up in the archives of Guatemala until that country threw off the yoke of Spain, when the original manuscripts fell into the hands of an English

gentlemen resident in the country, and a translation was published in London, in 1822, which was the first notice of the discovered city laid before the public of Europe. While the report of Del Rio was suffered to remain unpublished and unknown, Captain Dupaix was sent at the head of another expedition to explore the ancient monuments of the country, and in 1807 he visited Palenque. But his report, and the drawings which accompanied it, were also suffered to sleep in the museum at Mexico for a number of years; they were, however, eventually published in France. A splendid work on the antiquities of Mexico, in seven volumes folio, was published in London, by Lord Kingsborough, of which the discoveries of Captain Dupaix form a portion. Colonel Galindo and Mr. Waldeck have since visited Palenque; but the latest traveller who has published an account of the place is Mr. Stephens, and to his description we are principally indebted for the information which we now proceed to lay before our readers.

"The city was built," says Captain Dupaix, "on the brow of a chain of rugged mountains, and occupied a space of ground seven miles and a half in extent. A situation so elevated rendered it easily defensible against any hostile attack, while the woods which diversified the face of the wide and beautiful landscape lying around it, contributed to make it an equally desirable residence in time of peace."

THE PALACE OF PALENQUE.

The remains of the city consist of a number of buildings, in a state of decay, scattered over a considerable space, and so surrounded by trees, as to be entirely concealed from view, until the spectator is close to them. Of the principal edifice, called by travellers the palace, the engraving at the head of this paper presents a front view, partially restored from its present ruined condition. Mr. Stephens' description of these interesting remains is as follows.

The palace stands on an artificial elevation of an oblong form, forty feet high, three hundred and ten feet in front and rear, and two hundred and sixty feet on each side. This elevation was formerly faced with stone, which has been thrown down by the growth of trees, and its form is hardly distinguishable.

The building faces the east, and measures two hundred and twenty-eight feet front, by one hundred and eighty feet deep. Its height is not more than twenty-five feet, and all around it had a broad projecting cornice of stone. The front contained fourteen doorways, about nine feet wide each, and the intervening piers are between six and seven feet wide. On the left, in approaching the palace, eight of the piers have fallen down, as has also the corner on the right, and the terrace underneath is cumbered with the ruins; only six piers remain entire and the rest of the front is open.

SCULPTURED HISTORY.

The building was constructed of stone, with a mortar of lime and sand, and the whole front was covered with stucco and painted. The piers were ornamented with spirited figures in bas-relief. On the top are three hieroglyphics sunk in the stucco. It is enclosed by a rich ornamented border, about ten feet high and six wide, of which only a part now remains. The principal personage stands in an upright position, and in profile, exhibiting an extraordinary facial angle of about forty-five degrees. The upper part of the head seems to have been compressed and lengthened, perhaps by the same process employed upon the heads of the Choctaw and Flathead Indians of another part of the same continent. The head represents a different species from any now existing in that region of the country; and supposing the bas-reliefs to be images of real personages, or the creations of artists according to their ideas of perfect figures, they indicate a race of people now lost and unknown. The head-dress is evidently a plume of feathers. Over the shoulders is a short covering decorated with studs and a breastplate; part of the ornament of the girdle is broken; the tunic is probably a leopard's skin; and the whole dress no doubt exhibits the costume of this unknown people. He holds in his hand a staff or sceptre, and opposite his hands are the marks of three hieroglyphics, which have decayed or been broken off. At his feet are two naked figures seated cross-legged, and apparently suppliants. A fertile imagination might find many explanations for these strange figures, but all such conjectural interpretations must be unsatisfactory. The hieroglyphics doubtless tell its history. The stucco is of admirable consistency, and hard

as stone. It was painted, and in different places about it the remains of red, blue, yellow, black, and white may yet be discovered.

The piers which are still standing contained other figures of the same general character, but which, unfortunately, are more mutilated. Those piers which are fallen were no doubt enriched with the same ornaments. Each one had some specific meaning, and the whole probably presented some allegory or history; and when entire and painted, the effect in ascending the terrace must have been imposing and beautiful.

The builders were evidently ignorant of the principle of the arch, and the ceiling of the corridor was supported by stones lapping over as they rose, as in the Cyclopean remains in Greece and Italy. Along the top was a layer of flat stone, and the sides being plastered presented a flat surface. The long, unbroken corridors in front of the palace were probably intended for lords and gentlemen in waiting; or perhaps in that beautiful position, which, before the forest grew up, must have commanded an extended view of a cultivated and inhabited plain, the king himself sat to receive the reports of his officers and to administer justice.

From the centre door of the inner corridor a range of stone steps thirty feet long leads to a rectangular court-yard, eighty feet long by seventy broad. On each side of the steps are grim and gigantic figures, carved in stone in basso-relievo, nine or ten feet high. They are adorned with rich head-dresses and necklaces, but their attitude is that of pain and trouble. The design and anatomical proportions of the figures are faulty, but there is a force of expression about them which shows the skill and conceptive power of the artist.

On each side of the court-yard, the palace was divided into apartments, probably for sleeping. On the right the piers have all fallen down. On the left they are still standing, and ornamented with stucco figures.

At the further side of the court-yard rises another flight of stone steps, corresponding with those in front, on each side of which are carved figures, and on the surface between are single cartouches of hieroglyphics. The whole court-yard is overgrown with trees, and encumbered with ruins several feet high, so that the exact architectural arrangements could not be seen.

The part of the building which forms the rear of the court-yard, communicating with it by the steps, consists of two corridors, the same as the front, paved, plastered, and ornamented with stucco.

In the farther corridor the wall in some places broken, and exhibits several separate coats of plaster and paint. In one place six layers were counted, each of which had the remains of colours. In another place there seemed a line of written characters in black ink. An effort was made to get at them; but in the endeavour to remove a thin upper stratum, they came off with it, and the attempt was therefore abandoned.

This corridor opens upon a second court-yard, eighty feet long, and but thirty across. The floor of the corridor is ten feet above that of the court-yard; and on the wall underneath are square stones, with hieroglyphics sculptured upon them. On the piers are stuccoed figures, but in a ruined condition.

On the other side of the court-yard are two ranges of corridors, which terminate the building in this direction. The first of them is divided into three apartments, with doors opening from the extremities upon the western corridor. All the piers are standing except that on the north-west corner. All are covered with stucco-ornaments, and one with hieroglyphics. The rest contain figures in bas-relief. The first was enclosed by a border, very wide at the bottom, part of which is destroyed. The subject consists of two figures with plumes of feathers and other decorations for head-dresses, necklaces, girdles, and sandals; each has hold of the same curious baton, part of which is destroyed; and opposite their hands are hieroglyphics, which probably give the history of these incomprehensible personages. The others are more ruined.

On the left are several distinct and independent buildings. The principal of these is the tower, on the south side of the second court, conspicuous by its height and proportions, but on examination in detail, found unsatisfactory and uninteresting. Within is another tower, distinct from the outer one, and a stone staircase, so narrow that a large man could not ascend it. The staircase terminates against a dead stone ceiling, closing all farther passage, the last step being only six or eight inches from it.

East of the tower is another building with two corridors, one richly decorated with pictures in stucco, and having in

the centre an elliptical tablet, four feet long, and three wide, of hard stone set in the wall; and the sculpture in bas-relief. Around it are the remains of a rich stucco-border. The principal figure sits cross-legged on a couch ornamented with two leopards' heads; the attitude is easy, the physiognomy the same as that of the other personages, and the expression calm and benevolent. The figure wears a necklace of pearls, to which is suspended a medallion, containing a face; perhaps intended as an image of the sun. Like every other subject of sculpture in the place, the personage has ear-rings, bracelets on the wrists, and a girdle round the loins. The head-dress differs from most of the others at Palenque—in wanting the plume of feathers. Near the head are three hieroglyphics.

The other figure, which seems that of a woman, is sitting cross-legged on the ground, richly dressed; and apparently in the act of making an offering. In this supposed offering is seen a plume of feathers, in which the head-dress of the principal person is deficient. Over the head of this personage are four hieroglyphics. This is the only piece of sculptured stone about the palace, except those in the court-yard. Under it formerly stood a table, of which the impression against the wall is still visible.

At the extremity of this corridor there is an aperture in the pavement, leading by a flight of steps to a platform; from this a door, with an ornament in stucco over it, opens by another flight of steps upon a narrow, dark passage, terminating in other corridors which run transversely; these are called subterraneous apartments; but there are windows opening from them above the ground, and, in fact, they are merely a ground-floor below the pavement of the corridors. In most parts, however, they are so dark that it is necessary to visit them with candles. There are no bas-reliefs or stucco-ornaments; and the only objects worthy of attention, are several stone tables; one crossing and blocking up the corridor, about eight feet long, four wide, and three high. One of these lower corridors has a door opening upon the back part of the terrace; and in two other places there were flights of steps leading to corridors above. Probably these were sleeping apartments.

In one of the rooms the walls are more richly decorated with stucco-ornaments than any other in the palace; but unfortunately, they are much mutilated. Near it is an apartment containing a small altar. It was richly ornamented, like those which will be hereafter referred to in other buildings; and from the appearance of the back walls, it is probable there had been stone tablets.

GENERAL CHARACTER OF THE RUINS.

In our utter ignorance of the habits of the people who formerly occupied this building, it is impossible to determine for what uses these different apartments were intended; but if we are right in calling it a palace, the name which the Indians give it, it seems probable that the part surrounding the court-yards was for public and state occasions, and that the rest was occupied as the place of residence of the royal family; this room, with the small altar, we may suppose was what would be called, in our own times, a royal chapel.

Such is the ruined palace of Palenque; and from this description the reader will form some idea of the profusion of its ornaments, of their unique and striking character, and of their mournful effect, shrouded by trees; and perhaps fancy will present it as it was before the hand of ruin swept over it, perfect in its amplitude and rich decorations, and occupied by the strange people whose portraits and figures now adorn its walls.

THE FIRST PYRAMIDAL STRUCTURE OF PALENQUE.

From the palace no other building is visible. Passing out by what is called the subterraneous passage, you descend the south-west corner of the terrace, and at the foot immediately commence ascending a ruined pyramidal structure, which appears once to have had steps on all its sides. These steps have been thrown down by the trees, and it is necessary to clamber over stones, aiding the feet by clinging to the branches. The ascent is so steep, that if the first man displaces a stone, it bounds down the side of the pyramid, and woe to those behind. About half way up, through openings in the trees, is seen a building standing on a structure one hundred and ten feet high on the slope.

The building is seventy-six feet in front, and twenty-five feet deep. It has five doors, and six piers, all standing. The whole front was richly ornamented in stucco, and the corner piers are covered with hieroglyphics, each of which contains ninety-six squares.

The interior of the building is divided into two corridors, running lengthwise, with a ceiling rising nearly to a point, as in the palace, and paved with large square stones. The front corridor is seven feet wide. The separating wall is very massive, and has three doors, a large one in the centre, and a smaller one on each side. In this corridor, on each side of the principal door, is a large tablet of hieroglyphics, each thirteen feet long and eight feet high, and each divided into two hundred and forty squares of characters or symbols. Both are set in the wall so as to project three or four inches. In one place a hole in the wall has been made close to the side of one of them, apparently for the purpose of attempting its removal, by which it may be seen that the stone is about a foot thick. The sculpture is in bas-relief.

The corridor in the rear is dark and gloomy, and divided into three apartments. Each of the side apartments has two narrow openings about three inches wide and a foot high. They have no remains of sculpture, or paintings, or stuccoed ornaments. In the centre apartment, set in the back wall, and fronting the principal door of entrance, is another tablet of hieroglyphics, four feet six inches wide, and three feet six inches high. The roof above it is tight; consequently, it has not suffered from exposure, and the hieroglyphics are perfect though the stone is cracked lengthwise through the middle.

There is one important fact to be noticed. The hieroglyphics are the same as were found at Copan and Quirigua. The intermediate country is now occupied by races of Indians speaking many different languages, and entirely unintelligible to each other; but there is room for the belief that the whole of this country was once occupied by the same race, speaking the same language, or, at least, having the same written characters.

THE SECOND PYRAMIDAL STRUCTURE OF PALENQUE.

In front of this building, at the foot of the pyramidal structure, is a small stream. Crossing this, we come upon a broken stone terrace, about sixty feet on the slope, with a level esplanade at the top one hundred and ten feet in breadth, from which rises another pyramidal structure, now ruined and overgrown with trees. This building is fifty feet front, thirty-one feet deep, and has three doorways. The whole front was covered with stuccoed ornaments. The interior is divided into two corridors running lengthwise, with ceilings as before, and pavements of large square stones, in which forcible breaches have been made, doubtless by Captain Del Rio, and excavations underneath. The back corridor is divided into three apartments, and opposite the principal door of entrance is an oblong inclosure, with a heavy cornice or moulding of stucco, and a doorway richly ornamented over the top, but now much defaced; on each side of the doorway was a tablet of sculptured stone, both of which, however, have been removed.

Near this building, was discovered, lying on its face, and half buried in an accumulation of earth and stones, the only statue that has been found at Palenque. Its expression of serene repose and its strong resemblance to Egyptian statues are striking, though in size it does not compare with the gigantic remains of Egypt. In height it is ten feet six inches, of which two feet six inches were under ground. The head-dress is lofty and spreading; there are two holes in the place of ears, which were perhaps adorned with ear-rings of gold and pearls. Round the neck is a necklace, and pressed against the breast by the right hand is an instrument apparently with teeth. The left hand rests on a hieroglyphic, from which descends some symbolical ornament.

THE THIRD PYRAMIDAL STRUCTURE AT PALENQUE.

From the foot of the elevation on which the last mentioned building stands, their bases almost touching, rises another pyramidal structure of about the same height, on the top of which is another building. Such is the density of the forest, even on the sides of the pyramidal structure, that, though in a right line but a small distance apart, one of these buildings cannot be seen from the other.

This building is thirty-eight feet front, and twenty-eight feet deep, and has three doors. The end piers are ornamented with hieroglyphics in stucco, and two large medallions in handsome compartments, and the intermediate ones with bas-reliefs, also in stucco, similar, in general character, to those in the other buildings.

The interior is divided into two corridors, about nine feet wide each, and paved with stone. The front corridor

has a ceiling rising nearly to a point, and covered at the top with a layer of flat stones. In several places on each side are holes, which are found also in all the other corridors; they were probably used to support poles for scaffolding while the building was in process of erection, and have never been filled up.

The back corridor is divided into three apartments. In the centre, facing the principal door of entrance, is an enclosed chamber, similar to that in the last building, termed an oratory or altar. The top of the doorway was gorgeous with stuccoed ornaments, and on the piers at each side were stone tablets in bas-relief. Within, the chamber was four feet seven inches deep, and nine feet wide.

There were no stuccoed ornaments or paintings, but, set in the back wall, was a stone tablet covering the whole width of the chamber, nine feet wide and eight feet high. This tablet is the most perfect and most interesting monument in Palenque. It is composed of three separate stones, the joints in which are shown by the blurred lines in the engraving. The sculpture is perfect and the characters and figures stand clear and distinct on the stone. The principal personages seem to be making offerings. Both personages stand on the backs of human beings, one of whom supports himself by his hands and knees, and the other seems crushed to the ground by the weight. Between these, at the foot of the tablet, are two figures sitting cross-legged, one bracing himself with his right hand on the ground, and with the left supporting a square table; the action and attitude of the other are the same, except that they are in reverse order. The table also rests upon their bended necks, and their distorted countenances may perhaps be considered expressions of pain and suffering. They are both clothed in leopard-skins. Upon this table rest two batons crossed, their upper extremities richly ornamented, and supporting what seems a hideous mask, the eyes widely expanded, and the tongue hanging out. This seems to be the object to which the principal personages are making offerings*.

The pier on each side of the doorway contained a stone tablet with figures carved in bas-relief. These tablets, however, have been removed from their place to the village, and set up in the wall of a house as ornaments.

The oratorio or altar is perhaps the most interesting portion of the ruins of Palenque. Comparatively the hand of time has spared it, and the great tablet stands perfect and entire, after an exposure, for ages, to the action of the weather. Lonely, deserted, and without any worshippers at its shrine, the figures and characters are distinct as when the people who reared it went up to pay their adorations before it.

OTHER PYRAMIDAL STRUCTURE.

Near this, on the top of another pyramidal structure, was another building, now entirely in ruins, which apparently has been shattered and hurled down by an earthquake. The stones are strewn on the side of the pyramid, and it is impossible even to make out the ground-plan.

On another pyramidal structure one hundred feet high from the bank of the river is another building twenty feet front and eighteen feet deep, but in an unfortunately ruined condition. The whole of the front wall has fallen, leaving the outer corridor entirely exposed. Fronting the door, and against the back wall of the inner corridor, was a large stucco ornament representing a figure sitting on a couch; but a great part has fallen or been taken off and carried away. The body of the couch, with tiger's feet, is all that now remains. The outline of two tigers' heads and of the sitting personage is seen on the wall. The loss or destruction of this ornament is the more to be regretted, as, from what remains, it appears to have been superior in execution to any other stucco relief in Palenque. The body of the couch is entire, and the leg and foot hanging down the side are elegant specimens of art and models for study.

Such are the edifices of Palenque; appearing, according to Mr. Stephens' description, to be included within an area of less than half a mile square. Earlier travellers represent the ruins as spreading over a very much larger space, but Mr. Stephens is persuaded that those described above are all that have ever been discovered, and is induced, from repeated inquiries of Indians who had traversed the forest in every direction in the dry season, to believe that no more exist. He adds, however, that considering the space now occupied by the ruins, as the site of palaces, temples, and public buildings, and supposing the houses of the inhabit-

ants to have been, like those of the Egyptians and the present race of Indians, of frail and perishable materials, and, as at Memphis and Thebes, to have disappeared altogether, the city may have covered an immense extent.

THE RUINS OF OCOSINGO.

The village of Ocosingo occupies a beautiful situation, surrounded by mountains, in the province of Chiapas. In the neighbourhood are the ruins of another ancient town, of which we extract Mr. Stephens' account.

We saw, on a high elevation, through openings in trees growing around it, one of the buildings of Tonila, the Indian name in this region for stone houses. Approaching it we passed on the plain in front two stone figures lying on the ground, with the faces upward; they were well carved, but the characters were somewhat faded by long exposure to the elements, although still distinct. Leaving them, we rode on to the foot of a high structure, probably a fortress, rising in a pyramidal form, with five spacious terraces. These terraces had all been faced with stone and stuccoed, but in many places they were broken and overgrown with grass and shrubs. Taking advantage of one of the broken parts, we rode up the first pitch, and, following the platform of the terrace, ascended by another breach to the second, and in the same way to the third: there we tied our horses, and climbed up on foot. On the top was a pyramidal structure overgrown with trees, supporting the building which we had seen from the plain below. Among the trees were several wild lemons, loaded with fruit, and of very fine flavour. The building is fifty feet front, and thirty-five feet deep; it is constructed of stone and lime, and the whole front was once covered with stucco; of which part of the cornice and mouldings still remain. The entrance is by a door-way ten feet wide, which leads into a sort of ante-chamber, on each side of which is a small door-way, leading into an apartment ten feet square. The walls of these apartments were once covered with stucco, which had fallen down; part of the roof had given way, and the floor was covered with ruins. In one of them was the same pitchy substance we had noticed in the sepulchre at Copan. The roof was formed of stones, lapping over each other, and forming some approach to the arch.

In the back wall of the centre chamber was a door-way of the same size with that in front, which led to an apartment without any partitions, but in the centre was an oblong enclosure, eighteen feet by eleven, which was manifestly intended as the most important part of the edifice. The door was choked up with ruins to within a few feet of the top, but over it, and extending along the whole front of the structure, was a large stucco ornament, which at first impressed us most forcibly by its striking resemblance to the winged globe over the doors of the Egyptian temples. Part of this ornament had fallen down, and, striking the heap of rubbish underneath, had rolled beyond the door of entrance. We endeavoured to roll it back and restore it to its place, but it proved too heavy for the strength of four men and a boy. The part which remains differs in detail from the winged globe—the wings are reversed; there is a fragment of a circular ornament which may have been intended for a globe, but there are no remains of serpents entwining it.

There was another surprising feature in this door—the lintel was a beam of wood; of what species we did not know, but our guide said it was of the sapote-tree. It was so hard that, on being struck, it rang like metal, and was perfectly sound, without a worm-hole or other symptom of decay. The surface was smooth and even, and from a very close examination we were of the opinion that it must have been trimmed with an instrument of metal.

Under this doorway was an opening, which was said to be the mouth of a cave leading to Palenque. On examination it proved to be a chamber corresponding with the dimensions given of the outer walls. The floor was encumbered with rubbish two or three feet deep, the walls were covered with stuccoed figures, among which that of a monkey was conspicuous, and against the back wall were two figures of men in profile, with their faces toward each other, well drawn and as large as life, but the feet concealed by the rubbish on the floor. In general appearance and character they were the same as those carved on stone at Palenque.

By means of a tree growing close against the wall of the building, we climbed to the top, and saw another edifice very near and on the top of a still higher structure. We climbed

* See wood-cut representation, page 176.

up to this, and found it of the same general plan, but more dilapidated. Descending, we passed between two other buildings on pyramidal elevations, and came out upon an open table which had probably once been the site of the city. It was protected on all sides by the same high terraces, overlooking for a great distance the whole country round, and rendering it impossible for an enemy to approach from any quarter without being discovered. Across the table-land was a high and narrow causeway, which seemed partly natural and partly artificial, and at some distance on which was a mound, with the foundations of a building that had probably been a tower. Beyond this the causeway extended till it joined a range of mountains.

THE RUINS OF UXMAL.

In the province of Yucatan are situated the ruins of Uxmal, of which Mr. Stephens gives the following description.

The first object that arrests the eye on emerging from the forest, is a building rising to a considerable elevation. Drawn off by mounds of ruins, and piles of gigantic buildings, the eye returns and again fastens upon this lofty structure. It was the first building I entered. From its front doorway I counted sixteen elevations, with broken walls, and mounds of stones, and vast magnificent edifices, which at that distance seemed 'untouched by time, and defying ruin. I stood in the doorway when the sun went down, throwing from the buildings a prodigious breadth of shadow, darkening the terraces on which they stood, and presenting a scene strange enough for a work of enchantment.

The building is sixty-eight feet long. The elevation on which it stands is built up solid from the plain, entirely artificial. Its form is not pyramidal, but oblong and rounding, being two hundred and forty feet long at the base, and one hundred and twenty broad, and it is protected all around, to the very top, by a wall of square stones. Perhaps the high ruined structures at Palenque, which we have called pyramidal, and which were so ruined that we could not make them out exactly, were originally of the same shape. On the east side of the structure is a broad range of stone steps between eight and nine inches high, and so steep that great care is necessary in ascending and descending. Of these we counted a hundred and one in their places; nine were wanting at the top; and, perhaps, twenty were covered with rubbish at the bottom. At the summit of the steps is a stone platform, four feet and a half wide, running along the rear of the building. There is no door in the centre, but at each end a door opens into an apartment eighteen feet long and nine wide, and between the two is a third apartment of the same width and thirty-four feet long. The whole building is of stone; inside, the walls are of polished smoothness; outside, up to the height of the door, the stones are plain and square; above this line there is a rich cornice or moulding, and from this to the top of the building all the sides are covered with rich and elaborate sculptured ornaments, forming a sort of arabesque. The style and character of these ornaments were entirely different from those of any we had seen before, either in that country or any other; they bore no resemblance whatever to those of Copan, or Palenque, and were quite as unique and peculiar. The designs were strange and incomprehensible, very elaborate, sometimes grotesque, but often simple, tasteful, and beautiful. Among the intelligible subjects, are squares and diamonds, with busts of human beings, heads of leopards, and compositions of leaves and flowers, and the ornaments known everywhere as *grecques*. The ornaments which succeed each other are all different; the whole form an extraordinary mass of richness and complexity, and the effect is both grand and curious. And the construction of these ornaments is not less peculiar and striking than the general effect. There were no tablets or single stones, each representing separately and by itself an entire subject; but every ornament or combination is made up of separate stones, on each of which part of the subject was carved, and which was then set in its place in the wall. Each stone by itself was an unmeaning fractional part; but, placed by the side of others, helped to make a whole, which, without it, would be incomplete. Perhaps it may, with propriety, be called a species of sculptured mosaic.

From the front door of this extraordinary building a pavement of hard cement, twenty-two feet long by fifteen broad, leads to the roof of another building, seated lower down on the artificial structure. There is no stair-case, or other visible communication between the two; but descend-

ing by a pile of rubbish along the side of the lower one, and groping around the corner, we entered a doorway in front four feet wide, and found within, a chamber twelve feet high, with corridors running the whole breadth, of which the front one was seven feet three inches deep, and the other three feet nine inches. The inner walls were of smooth and polished square stones, and there was no inner door or means of communication with any other place. Outside, the doorway was loaded with ornaments, and the whole exterior was like that of the building described above. The steps leading from the doorway to the foot of the structure were entirely destroyed.

THE LEGEND OF THE CASA DEL ANANO.

The Indians regard these ruins with superstitious reverence. They will not go near them at night, and they have the old story that immense treasure is hidden among them. Each of the buildings has its name given to it by the Indians. This is called the Casa del Anano, or House of the Dwarf, and it is consecrated by a wild legend, which, as I sat in the door-way, I received from the lips of an Indian, as follows.

There was an old woman who lived in a hut on the very spot now occupied by the structure on which this building is perched, and opposite the Casa del Gobernador (which will be mentioned hereafter), who went mourning that she had no children. In her distress she one day took an egg, covered it with a cloth, and laid it away carefully in one corner of the hut. Every day she went to look at it, until one morning she found the egg hatched, and a *criatura*, or creature, or baby, born. The old woman was delighted, and called it her son, provided it with a nurse, and took good care of it, so that in one year it walked and talked like a man; and then it stopped growing. The old woman was more delighted than ever, and said he would be a great lord or king. One day she told him to go to the house of the gobernador, and challenge him to a trial of strength. The dwarf tried to beg off, but the old woman insisted, and he went. The guard admitted him, and he flung his challenge at the gobernador. The latter smiled and told him to lift a stone of three arrobas, or seventy-five pounds, at which the little fellow cried and returned to his mother, who sent him back to say that if the gobernador lifted it first, he would afterwards. The gobernador lifted it, and the dwarf did the same. The gobernador then tried him with other feats of strength, and the dwarf regularly did whatever was done by the gobernador. At length, indignant at being matched by a dwarf, the gobernador told him that, unless he made a house in one night higher than any in the place, he would kill him. The poor dwarf again returned crying to his mother, who bade him not be disheartened, and the next morning he awoke and found himself in this lofty building. The gobernador, seeing it from the door of his palace, was astonished, and sent for the dwarf, and told him to collect two bundles of *cogoiat*, a wood of a very hard species, with one of which he, the gobernador, would beat the dwarf over the head, and afterwards the dwarf should beat him with the other. The dwarf again returned crying to his mother; but the latter told him not to be afraid, and put on the crown of his head a *tortillita de trigo*, a small thin cake of wheat-flour. The trial was made in the presence of all the great men in the city. The gobernador broke the whole of the bundle over the dwarf's head without hurting the little fellow in the least. He then tried to avoid the trial on his own head, but he had given his word in the presence of his officers, and was obliged to submit. The second blow of the dwarf broke his skull in pieces, and all the spectators hailed the victor as their new gobernador. The old woman then died; but at the Indian village of Mani, seventeen leagues distant, there is a deep well, from which opens a cave that leads underground an immense distance to Merida. In this cave, on the bank of a stream, under the shade of a large tree, sits an old woman with a serpent by her side, who sells water in small quantities, not for money, but only for a *criatura*, or baby, to give the serpent to eat; and this old woman is the mother of the dwarf. Such is the fanciful legend connected with this edifice; but it hardly seemed more strange than the structure to which it referred.

CASA DE LAS MONJAS.

The adjacent building is called by a name which may originally have had some reference to the vestals, who in Mexico were employed to keep burning the sacred fire; but

I believe in the mouths of the Indians of Uxmal fit has no reference whatever to history, tradition, or legend, but is derived entirely from Spanish associations. It is called Casa de las Monjas, or house of the nuns, or the convent. It is situated on an artificial elevation about fifteen feet high. Its form is quadrangular, and one side, according to my measurement, is ninety-five paces in length. It was not possible to pace all around it, from the masses of fallen stones which encumbered it in some places, but it may be safely stated at two hundred and fifty feet square. Like the house of the dwarf, it is built entirely of cut stone, and the whole exterior is filled with the same rich, elaborate, and incomprehensible sculptured ornaments.

The principal entrance is by a large door-way into a beautiful *patio*, or court-yard, grass-grown but clear of trees, and the whole of the façade is ornamented more richly and elaborately than the outside, and is in a more perfect state of preservation. On one side the combination was in the form of diamonds, simple, chaste, and tasteful; and at the head of the court-yard two gigantic serpents, with their heads broken and fallen, were winding from opposite directions along the whole façade.

In front, and on a line with the door of the convent, is another building, on a lower foundation, of the same general character, called Casa de Tortugas, from sculptured turtles over the door-way. This building had in several places huge cracks, as if it had been shaken by an earthquake. It stands nearly in the centre of the ruins, and the top commands a view all round of singular but wrecked magnificence.

Beyond this, a little to the right, approached by passing over mounds of ruins, was another building, which at a great distance attracted our attention by its conspicuous ornaments. We reached it by ascending two high terraces. The main building was similar to the others, and along the top of it ran a high ornamented wall, which at a distance looked more like a row of pigeon-houses than anything else, and which was therefore called Casa de Palomos, or house of pigeons.

In front was a broad avenue, with a line of ruins on each side, leading beyond the walls of the convent to a great mound of ruins, which probably had once been a building with which it was connected; and beyond this is a lofty building in the rear, to which this seemed but a vestibule, or porters' lodge. Between the two was a large patio, or court-yard, with corridors on each side, and the ground of the court-yard sounded hollow. In one place the surface was broken, and I descended into a large excavation, cemented, which had probably been intended as a granary. At the back of the court-yard, on a high broken terrace, which it was difficult to climb, was another edifice more ruined than the others, but which, from the style of its remains and its commanding position, overlooking every other building except the house of the dwarf, and apparently having been connected with the distant mass of ruins in front, must have been one of the most important in the city, perhaps the principal temple. The Indians called it the quartet, or guard-house. It commanded a view of other ruins not contained in the enumeration of those seen from the house of the dwarf; and the whole presented a scene of barbaric magnificence, utterly confounding all previous notions in regard to the aboriginal inhabitants of this country, and calling up emotions which had not been awakened to the same extent by anything we had yet seen.

THE CASA DEL GOBERNADOR

Is the grandest in position, the most stately in architecture and proportions, and the most perfect in preservation of all the structures remaining at Uxmal.

It stands on three ranges of terraces. The first terrace is six hundred feet long and five feet high. It is walled with cut stone, and on the top is a platform twenty feet broad, from which rises another terrace fifteen feet high. At the corner this terrace is supported by cut stones, having the faces rounded so as to give a better finish than with sharp angles. The great platform is flat and clear of trees, but abounding in green stumps of the forest but lately cleared away, and now planted, or rather, from its irregularity, sown with corn, rising, as yet, barely a foot from the ground. At the south-east corner of this platform is a row of round pillars eighteen inches in diameter, and three or four feet high, extending about one hundred feet along the platform; and these were the nearest approach to pillars or columns that we saw in all our exploration of the ruins of

that country. In the middle of the terrace, along an avenue leading to a range of steps, was a broken round pillar, inclined and falling, with trees growing around it.

In the centre of the platform, at a distance of two hundred and five feet from the border in front, is a range of stone steps more than a hundred feet broad, and thirty-five in number, ascending to a third terrace, fifteen feet above the last, and thirty-five feet from the ground, which, being elevated on a naked plain, formed a most commanding position. The erection of these terraces alone was an immense work. On this third terrace, with its principal doorway facing the range of steps, stands the noble structure of the Casa del Gobernador. The façade measures three hundred and twenty feet. Away from the region of dreadful rains, and the rank growth of forests which smother the ruins of Palenque, it stands with all its walls erect, and almost as perfect as when deserted by its inhabitants. The whole building is of stone, plain up to the moulding that runs along the top of the door-way, and above filled with the same rich, strange, and elaborate sculpture, among which is particularly conspicuous the ornament before referred to as *la grecque*. There is no rudeness or barbarity in the design or proportions; on the contrary, the whole wears an air of architectural symmetry and grandeur; and as the stranger ascends the steps, and casts a bewildered eye along its open and desolate doors, it is hard to believe that he sees before him the work of a race in whose epitaph, as written by historians, they are called ignorant of art, and said to have perished in the rudeness of savage life. If it stood at this day on its grand artificial terrace in Hyde Park, or in the Garden of the Tuilleries, it would form a new order, I do not say equalling, but not unworthy to stand side by side with, the remains of Egyptian, Grecian, and Roman art.

THE LINTELS OF OCOSINGO.

There was one thing which seemed in strange want of conformity with all the rest. It was the first object that had arrested my attention in the house of the dwarf, and which I had marked in every other building. At Ocosingo we saw a wooden beam, and at Palenque the fragment of a wooden pole; at this place all the linteals had been of wood, and throughout the ruins most of them were in their places over the doors. These linteals were heavy beams, eight or nine feet long, eighteen or twenty inches wide, and twelve or fourteen thick. The wood was very hard, and rang under the blow of the machete. As our guide told us, it was of a species not found in the neighbourhood, but came from the distant forest near the Lake of Peten. Why wood was used in buildings otherwise of solid stone seemed unaccountable; if our guide was correct in regard to the place of its growth, each beam must have been carried on the shoulders of eight Indians, with the necessary relief carriers, a distance of three hundred miles; consequently it was rare, costly, and curious, and for that reason may have been considered ornamental. The position of these linteals was most trying, as they were obliged to support a solid mass of stone wall fourteen or sixteen feet high, and three or four in thickness. Once, perhaps, they were as strong as stone, but they showed that they were not as durable, and contained within them the seeds of destruction. Most it is true were in their places sound, and harder than lignum vitæ; but others were perforated by worm-holes; some were cracked in the middle, and the walls settling upon them, were fast overcoming their remaining strength; and others had fallen down altogether; in fact, except in the house of the nuns, the greatest destruction was from the decay and breaking of these wooden beams. If the linteals had been of stone, the principal buildings of this desolate city would at this day be almost entire; or, if the edifices had been still occupied under a master's eye, a decaying beam would have been replaced, and the building saved from ruin. In the moment of greatness and power, the builders never contemplated that the time would come when their city would be a desolation.

THE INTERIOR OF THE CASA DEL GOBERNADOR.

The Casa del Gobernador stands with its front to the east. In the centre, and opposite the range of steps leading up the terrace, are three principal doorways. The middle one is eight feet six inches wide, and eight feet ten inches high; the others are of the same height, but two feet less in width. The centre door opens into an apartment sixty feet long, and twenty-seven feet deep, which is divided into two corridors

by a wall three and a half feet thick, with a door of communication between, of the same size with the door of entrance. The plan is the same as that of the corridor in front of the palace at Palenque, except that here the corridor does not run the whole length of the building, and the back corridor has no door of egress. The floors are of smooth square stone, the walls of square blocks nicely laid, and smoothly polished. The ceiling forms a triangular arch without the keystone, as at Palenque; but instead of the rough stones overlapping or being covered with stucco, the layers of stone are bevelled as they rise, and present an even and polished surface. Throughout, the laying and polishing of the stones are as perfect as under the rules of the best modern masonry. From the centre apartment, the divisions on each wing corresponded exactly in size and finish, and the same uniformity was preserved in the ornaments. Throughout the roof was tight, the apartments were dry, and, to speak understandingly, a few thousand dollars expended in repairs would have restored it, and made it fit for the re-occupation of its royal owners. In one apartment the walls were coated with a very fine plaster of Paris, equal to the best seen on walls in this country. The rest were all of smooth polished stone. There were no paintings, stucco-ornaments, sculptured tablets, or other decorations whatever.

In another apartment we found what we regarded as a most interesting object. It was a beam of wood, about ten feet long, and very heavy, which had fallen from its place over the door-way, and, for some purpose or other, been hauled inside the chamber into a dark corner. On the face was a line of characters carved or stamped, almost obliterated; but which we made out to be hieroglyphics, and so far as we could understand them, similar to those at Copan and Palenque. There are at Uxmal no "idols," as at Copan; not a single stuccoed figure, or carved tablet, as at Palenque. Except this beam of hieroglyphics, though searching earnestly, we did not discover any one absolute point of resemblance.

XOCHICALCO.

Humboldt gives the following account of this remarkable monument:—

To the south-east of the city of Caenavaca (the ancient Quilmahuac), on the western declivity of the Cordillera of Anahuac, in that happy region designated by the inhabitants *Tierra templada*, temperate region, because it enjoys perpetual spring, rises an insulated hill, which according to the barometrical measurement of M. Algate, is 107 metres (nearly 351 feet) high. The Indians call it, in the Aztec dialect, Xochicalco, or the House of Flowers. The hill of Xochicalco is a mass of rocks, to which the hand of man has given a regular conic form, and which is divided into five stories or terraces, each of which is covered with masonry. These terraces are nearly 20 metres (about 65 feet), in perpendicular height, but narrow towards the top, as in the *teocallis*, or Aztec pyramids, the summit of which was decorated with an altar. The hill is surrounded by a very deep and broad ditch, so that the whole entrenchment is nearly 4000 metres (rather more than two miles and a half) in circumference. The summit of the hill of Xochicalco is an oblong platform, 72 metres (236 feet) from north to south, and 96 metres (315 feet) from east to west. This platform is encircled by a wall of hewn stone more than 2 metres (about 4½ feet) high, which served as a defence for the combatants. In the centre of this spacious military square, we find the remains of a pyramidal monument, the form of which resembles the *teocallis* we have already described. Among the hieroglyphical remains of the pyramid of Xochicalco, we distinguish heads of crocodiles spouting water, and figures of men sitting cross-legged, according to the custom of several nations in Asia.

OTHER MEXICAN ANTIQUITIES.

Many other ancient Indian monuments have been discovered in various parts of Mexico, and many, in all probability, still remain concealed from the eye of man in the depths of impenetrable forests. The pyramids or *teocallis** of Cholula are chiefly remarkable for the great magnitude of the principal one, the base of which measures four hundred and eighty yards on each side. Our readers will find an account of it in the *Saturday Magazine*, Vol. V. p. 175; and in Vol. VI. p. 42, there is some information respecting the ancient Mexicans, together with engravings from their paintings.

After the ample details we have laid before our readers, it

* *Teocalli* signifies holy house, or house of the gods.

will be sufficient briefly to mention the principal monuments which remain to be noticed. At MITLA there are the remains of a large palace, the architecture of which possesses a stately grandeur, and melancholy beauty, of a peculiar character. The roof of the portico is supported by plain cylindrical columns, and the façade of the palace is covered with a beautiful mat-work, or basket scroll, such as is found in Egyptian sepulchral chambers. At PAPANTA is a pyramid built of hewn blocks of porphyry, which are worked with great care and skill. Near the town of Tezcucoc are two large *teocallis*; and about twenty miles further north, near the small town of Teotihuacan is a group of nearly two hundred of such pyramids, two of which erected in honour of the sun and moon respectively are of great dimensions.

GENERAL REMARKS.

With regard to the period in which these remarkable edifices were erected, and the people by whom they were constructed, we have few data on which to found an opinion, except such as are derived from the structures themselves. The Spanish priests who went to this part of America on its conquest, set themselves vigorously to work in destroying every memorial of the former condition of the people, in order to weaken their attachment to the idolatry of their fathers. Thus unfortunately perished most of the materials for writing the earlier history of America. Some few records, however, have survived the general destruction: by which it appears that the Azteco, the people whom the Spaniards found in the possession of Mexico, had only been established there for about two hundred years; and that their predecessors in the dominion of the country were superior to them in the arts of peace, and were not addicted to the practice of such barbarous religious rites.

Some authors have assigned to these structures a very remote antiquity. The hypothesis has been advanced that the builders were a branch of the Anakim or Cyclopians family of Syria, the shepherd kings of Egypt, the Oscans of Etruria, and the Pelasgians of Greece, the Titans or giants of classical romance, and who are recorded to have been expelled from Egypt and Syria. Others have thought that they could trace among the traditions and remains of Mexico, evidence that the people were derived from a Jewish stock, and that some of their religious doctrines had sprung from a confused knowledge of Christianity. Mr. Stephens is of opinion that these structures are not the work of a people who have passed away and whose history is lost, but that there are strong reasons to believe them the creations of the same races who inhabited the country at the time of the Spanish conquest, or some not very distant progenitors.

Mr. Stephens is further inclined to consider the civilization of the natives of America as originating with themselves, and not to have been derived from any nation of the Old World. On this point we are of a different opinion, though we think he has successfully combated the idea of the very great antiquity of the structures. We have not space to enter at length into our reasons for assigning an eastern origin to the civilization of this part of America, but we are unwilling to close without a few brief remarks on the subject.

In the first place, we believe it to be impossible for men to rise unaided from a completely savage state, for reasons which our readers will find discussed in the *Saturday Magazine*, Vol. III. pp. 63, 102, 206.

Secondly, while we allow that undue weight has sometimes been assigned to minor points of resemblance between the architecture and customs of the Old and New Worlds, we think that too much similarity may be traced to be ascribed, when taken altogether, to mere accidental coincidence. Mr. Stephens says that little stress should be laid on the fact of the pyramidal form of building being common to both continents, as it is the simplest and surest mode of erecting a high structure upon a solid foundation. Granting the form to be sufficiently obvious, we would remark that there seems a peculiar propriety in diversifying the monotonous plains of Egypt and other parts of the East by the erection of what may be termed artificial mountains; while it is not so applicable to the bold and broken surface of these parts of America; which is to a certain extent an argument that the inhabitants of the latter region rather copied from others the plan of their edifices, than originated it themselves. Mr. Stephens further urges some points of dissimilarity between the edifices of Asia and America, as proofs of their not having a common origin, but the fol-

lowing account of the great temple of Bel or Belus at Babylon, taken from Herodotus, bears a very remarkable resemblance to that of the pyramidal structures of Mexico.

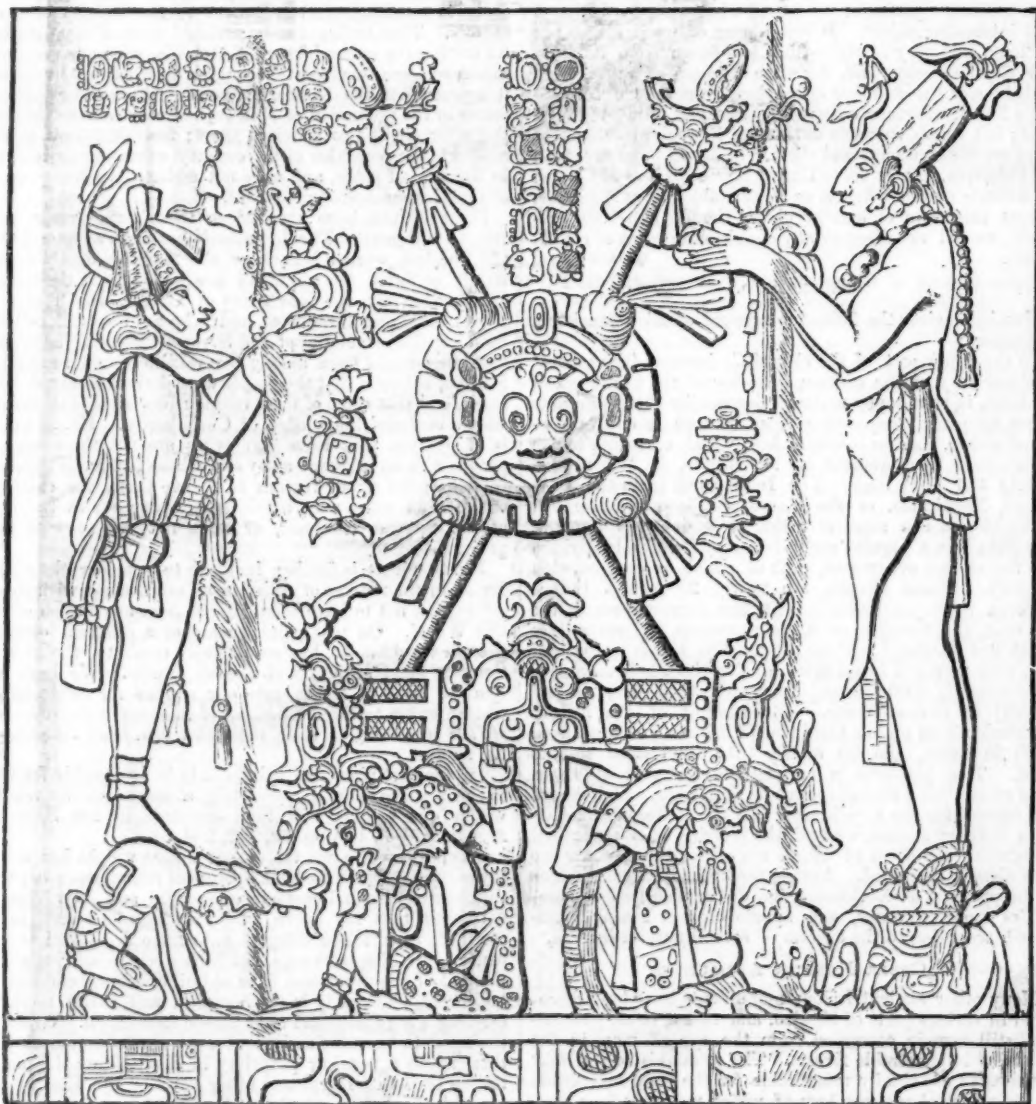
"It is a square building, each side of which is the length of two furlongs. In the midst rises a tower, of the solid depth or height of one furlong, on which, resting as a base, seven other turrets are built in regular succession. The ascent is on the outside: which winding from the ground is continued to the highest tower, and in the middle of the whole structure there is a convenient resting-place."

Lastly, as there can be no doubt of the Asiatic descent of the Americans, as well as the rest of the human race, we should be disposed to think that those who emigrated would carry with them some knowledge of the arts practised in their native country. We know from the Scriptures that Asia was the birthplace of man; but it has been sometimes supposed that America was peopled by wanderers, driven by adverse gales across the ocean, rather than by voluntary emigrants. In this case it is probable that they would have lost the knowledge of the arts; but we casually met with a

passage of Torquemada's *Indian Monarchy* which forcibly struck us at the time, and appears to us conclusive of the question. It is as follows:—

"According to the paintings which the most curious of these Indians possessed, and which at present I have, it appears that in order to come from the former country which they forsook, to that which they now inhabit, they crossed some great river or small strait and arm of the sea, the picture of which seems to represent an island situated midway in the channel which it intersects."

Now when we recollect that the two continents are divided by Behrings' Straits, which are only fifty miles across, and that the largest of the three Diomides Islands, four miles in length, lies in the centre of the channel, and when we recollect, moreover, that Torquemada wrote long before the geography of this part of the globe was known to Europeans; we can hardly hesitate in coming to the conclusion that America was peopled, partly if not entirely by emigrants from Asia, of sufficient intelligence to observe and record the particulars of their journey.



SCULPTURED TABLET IN THE RUINS OF PALENQUE.